

AF 13625
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Dated: October 4, 2007

Signature:

(Jeffrey S. Dickey)

Docket No.: M&R 3.0-033 CIP
(PATENT)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of:
Sculler et al.

Application No.: 09/677,153

Filed: October 2, 2000

Art Unit: 3625

For: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR
FACILITATING RESELLER
TRANSACTIONS

Examiner: R. E. Rhode

COMMUNICATION
RESPONSE TO NON-COMPLIANT APPEAL BRIEF

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

In accordance with the undersigned's teleconference with Everett Williams and in response to the Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief mailed September 4, 2007, Applicant hereby attaches a new appeal brief which replaces the prior appeal brief mailed on March 22, 2006.

The new brief identifies the status of all the claims.

In response to the objection that claim 102 is not mapped to the specification, the new brief expressly

states: "Similar support for these features may be found as cited above in connection with claim 75".

Dated: October 4, 2007

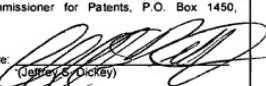
Respectfully submitted,

By 
Jeffrey S. Dickey
Registration No.: 35,858
LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG,
KRUML HOLZ & MENTLIK, LLP
600 South Avenue West
Westfield, New Jersey 07090
(908) 654-5000
Attorney for Applicant

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as First Class Mail, in an envelope addressed to: MS Appeal Brief - Patents, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

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(Jeffrey S. Dickey)

Docket No.: M&R 3.0-033 CIP
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Muller et al.

Application No.: 09/677,153

Group Art Unit: 3625

Filed: October 2, 2000

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For: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR
FACILITATING RESELLER
TRANSACTIONS

APPEAL BRIEF

MS Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

Applicant files this brief on Appeal to appeal from the non-final rejection of Claims 75-112 mailed January 18, 2007. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(c) and 37 C.F.R. § 41.20(b)(2) for the filing of the brief and fee for the extension of time. The Commissioner is also hereby authorized to charge any other fees that may be due and owing in connection with this appeal to Deposit Account No. 12-1095.

I. (I) REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

It is the undersigned's understanding that the real party in interest in the present appeal is M&R Marking Systems, LLC of Piscataway, New Jersey, which is owned by M&R Marking Holdings, Inc., which was acquired by Trodat Marking Products, Inc., which is owned by Trodat GmbH.

II. (II) RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

None. Applicant and its legal representatives, are not aware of any other appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings that will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

III. (III) STATUS OF CLAIMS

The present application is a continuation-in-part of the United States Patent Application No. 09/658,977 filed in September 11, 2000, which issued May 31, 2005 as U.S. Patent No. 6,901,376. U.S. Patent Application No. 09/658,977 in turn claims the benefit of the filing date of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/214,632 filed in June 28, 2000 and U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/153,183 filed in September 10, 1999.

Claims 1-44 are cancelled.

Claims 45-74 are withdrawn.

Claims 75-112 are pending in this application. Claims 75-112 have been finally rejected and form the basis for the appeal.

IV. (IV) STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

A non-final Office Action was mailed on January 18, 2007, in which Claims 75-112 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Lopez, Jr (U.S. Patent No. 7,143,056, herein "Lopez") in view of Official Notice. In response, a Notice of Appeal was filed on March 19, 2007. There are no previously unentered amendments and no amendment is submitted herewith.

V. (V) SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Applicant submits the following claim summaries in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 41.37(v). Because of the limited nature inherent in all summaries, any conflict between the summary and the claim language should be resolved in favor of the claim language, and examples are merely for explanation purposes only, and may not be used to limit the claim element to the specific example. Moreover, the grouping of the claims is for the purpose of addressing the current rejections. Different arguments regarding the claims' scope or patentability may result in different groupings.

Applicant also notes in advance that Figures 9-14 are particularly relevant to the claims on appeal.

A. Claims 75, 102, 111

The invention of Claim 75 provides a method of obtaining information about a personalized product to be provided from a provider to an organization. (See, e.g., Specification at page 31, lines 5-6.) By way of example only, the method may use a web page to obtain information about a stamp to be personalized, and the stamp may be provided by a manufacturer to another company. (See, e.g., *id.* at page 30, lines 17-22.) By further way of example, the personalization information may be a company logo. (See, e.g., *id.* at page 30, lines 19-22.)

The method includes receiving login information that identifies a first user within the organization, and a second user within the same organization. (See claim 75 at ¶¶2, 4.) The two users must provide different login information. By way of example, the first user may be an administrator within the organization and the second user may be an employee of the same organization. (See, e.g., *id.* at page 33, lines 10-19.)

The method further includes receiving, over a network, instructions from the first user. These instructions define which aspects of the information have values which may be changed by the second user, such that the instructions define at least one aspect which may be changed and at least one aspect which may not be changed. See claim 75 at ¶3. By way of example and as shown below, the aspects of the stamp may comprise a bank's name, its central location, a particular employee's office and the employee's ID number.

Text Box A contains	Content
Text Line A1	Your Bank & Trust
Text Line A2	Philadelphia, PA

931

Text Box B contains	Content
Text Line B1	East Phila. Office
Text Line B2	Teller: 123-456

932

(Specification at Figure 11 (portions omitted).) A bank employee may not be able to change the aspects relating to the bank's name and central location, but he may be able to change his particular office location 931 and employee number 932. (See, e.g., Specification at page 30, lines 19-22 and page 31, line 16 to page 32, line 7.) Accordingly, the first user may choose which aspects may be changed by other users, and transmit that information via a web page (See, e.g., Specification at Figure 9, page 32, lines 15-17, page 33, lines 10-19.)

The claimed method transmits, to the second user and over the network, the values of aspects of the personalization information. It also transmits an indication which

distinguishes the aspects that the second user may change from those that the second user may not change. For example, as shown above in the excerpt from Figure 11, the only aspects which may be changed are those shown in textboxes 931 and 932. (See, e.g., Specification at Figure 11, page 33, lines 1-9.)

This indication, namely whether the second user may change the aspect or not, is based on two different types of information. As described above, one type of information comprises the first user's instructions. As also described above, another type of information comprises the second user's login information (which is to be distinguished from the first user's login information). (See, e.g., Specification at page 31, line 16 to page 32, line 7, page 33, lines 15-19.)

Finally, the method receives, from the second user and again over the network, the value of an aspect which the second user was able to change and which has changed from the transmitted value. (See, e.g., Specification at page 31, lines 11-15.)

While patentably distinct from claim 75, there are aspects of claim 102 which are sufficiently similar to claim 75 that repeating the foregoing detail of claim 75 is not necessary for the purpose of understanding the impropriety of the particular rejections on appeal as they apply to claim 102. Claim 102 recites a system for obtaining information about personalized products comprising a processor for executing instructions. The instructions include: receiving login information identifying a first user and a second user, both within the same organization but having different login information; receiving instructions from the first user that define which aspects of information to be affixed to a product may be changed by the second user; displaying a list of the aspects to a second user where the list indicates which aspects

may be changed and which may not based on both the instructions from the first user and the second user's login information; and receiving from the second user the values of the aspects which may be changed. Similar support for these features may be found as cited above in connection with claim 75.

While patentably distinct from claim 75, there are aspects of claim 111 which are also sufficiently similar to claim 75 that repeating the foregoing detail of claim 75 is not necessary for the purpose of understanding the impropriety of the particular rejections on appeal as they apply to claim 111. Claim 111 provides a method of customizing a product to be sold by a provider to an organization. The product includes personalization information to be displayed by the product. The method receives login information identifying a first user; permits the first user to store the value of an aspect of the personalization information by determining whether the login information of the first user permits access to storing such value; and receives login information identifying a second user, wherein the login information of the second user is different than the login information of the first user. Similar support for these features may be found as cited above in connection with claim 75.

Claim 111 additionally sends data about the product over a network to the second user of the organization. The data includes unmodifiable aspects of the personalization information which have values stored by the first user of the organization. The method also provides for receiving the customized values for others aspects of the personalization information from the second user. (See, e.g., Specification at Figure 11, page 31, line 16 to page 32, line 7, page 33, lines 1-19.)

Yet further, according to Claim 111, the product is customized based on the values provided by both the first and

second user. (See, e.g., Specification at page 31, line 16 to page 32, line 7.)

B. Claims 96 and 103

Claim 96 requires storing information representing whether a first and second aspect of personalization information is locked or unlocked. "Aspects" of personalization information are described above in the foregoing section.

If the aspect is locked, the value of the aspect may not be changed. Conversely, if the aspect is unlocked, then the value of the aspect may be changed. (See, e.g., *id.* at page 32, lines 8-25.)

According to Claim 96, a web page is sent to the client describing the first and second aspect. If the aspect is locked, then the web page displays the value of the aspect. If the aspect is unlocked, then the web page indicates that the value of the aspect may be changed. (See, e.g., *id.* at Figures 10-11, page 32, line 8 to page 33, line 9.)

In the last step of Claim 96, an instruction is received, from the user, to change the information representing whether the first aspect is locked or unlocked. (See, e.g., *id.* page 33, lines 1-5.)

Accordingly, among other things, claim 96 provides not only transmitting values that are locked and unlocked from change via a web page, but changing the state of the lock as well.

Claim 103 recites similar, though not identical subject matter, in means-plus-function format. For example, the claim includes means for storing information representing whether a first and second aspect of the personalization information is locked or unlocked, whereby if an aspect is locked then the value of the aspect may not be changed and if an aspect is unlocked then the value of the aspect may be changed.

(See, e.g., *id.* at page 32, lines 8-25.) As indicated in Figure 1, the structure includes a database (e.g., database 100).

Claim 103 further recites means for sending a web page to the client describing the first and second aspect and, if the aspect is locked then the web page displays the value of the aspect. If the aspect is unlocked, then the web page indicates that the value of the aspect may be changed. (See, e.g., Specification at Figures 10-11, page 32, line 8 to page 33, line 9.) As illustrated by example in Figure 1, the structure includes a server (e.g., server 70) having a processor (e.g., processor 90) and instructions (e.g., instructions 80).

Finally, claim 103 recites means for receiving from the user an instruction to change the information representing whether the first aspect is locked or unlocked. (See, e.g., Specification at page 33, lines 1-5.) As illustrated by way of example in Figure 1, the structure includes a server (e.g., server 70) having a processor (e.g., processor 90) and instructions (e.g., instructions 80).

C. **Claim 104**

Claim 104 provides a method of receiving personalized information to be displayed on a product. As discussed above, the personalization information has aspects, and in turn the aspects have values. (See, e.g., Specification at page 30, lines 17-22, page 31, lines 5-10.)

The method includes receiving locking instructions from a first user, whereby if the instructions identify an aspect as being locked, then the value cannot be changed until the aspect is unlocked. (See, e.g., *id.* at page 32, lines 15-25.)

The values of aspects are sent to a second user and the method indicates whether the aspect is locked (at least one

of the aspects being locked). (See, e.g., *id.* at Figure 11, page 33, lines 1-9.)

When an instruction is received from the second user to unlock a locked aspect, the aspect value is resent with an indication that the value may now be changed. (See, e.g., *id.* at page 33, lines 1-19.) The method then receives the value of the prior locked aspect. (See, e.g., *id.* at page 31, lines 11-15.

VI. (VI) GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

The grounds for rejection to be reviewed on appeal are as follows:

Claims 75-112 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over *Lopez, Jr* (U.S. Patent No. 7,143,056, herein "*Lopez*") in view of Official Notice.

Applicant also respectfully refer the Board to the detailed discussion of the rejections below.

VII. (VII) ARGUMENT

A. Rejection of Claim 75 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Lopez in view of Official Notice

The Office Action rejected Claim 75 based on the argument that *Lopez* teaches all the features of Claim 75, with the exception of using the Internet to transfer information about product layout and fields which may be modified. The Examiner uses Official Notice to reject these latter features. The Examiner also asserts that the features identified by Official Notice are an obvious extension of the teachings of *Lopez*.

However, even when *Lopez* is combined with the features identified in the Official Notice, the combination still fails

to teach every feature of independent Claim 75. Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that it is insufficient to base the rejection solely on features identified in an Official Notice.

i. Summary of Lopez

Lopez teaches an automated print order system for business cards and stationary products. (Lopez, Abstract, ll. 1-2.) To set up the automated print order system, a requestor interface 31 is generated that can run on a user's computer (Lopez, col. 4, ll. 22-27, and in Fig. 1.) It is configured to enable a user to select a company tailored product according to a predetermined profile from an automated press system 38 (Lopez, Abstract, ll. 5-10, and at col. 4, lines 42-57.)

In Lopez, the requestor interface 31 is generated with the process shown in Fig. 3, reproduced below:

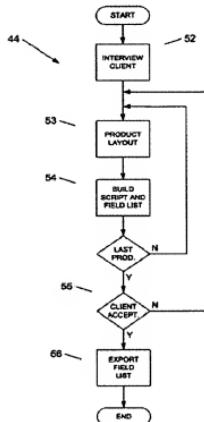


Fig. 3

As shown in step 52, "a printer representative ... will conduct an in-depth interview with the company client to determine the company's full range of business card and stationary needs 52."

(*Lopez*, at col. 5, ll. 21-24.) In addition, *Lopez* recites that "[t]he printer's electronic publishing staff then generates a prototypical product record for each product to be made available through the system." (*Lopez*, col. 5, ll. 30-32.) This is shown with respect to step 53 of Figure 3.

Lopez also mentions that the "Quark Express" software tool can be used by the electronic publishing staff to generate a script program in order to produce the requestor interface 31 (*Lopez*, col. 5, ll. 44-58.) An example of a user making a product request entry with the print order system is given in Figure 6. In addition, an example of a requestor interface 31 in a computer screen representation is shown with respect to Figure 7. The Examiner relies on both figures in support of the rejection.

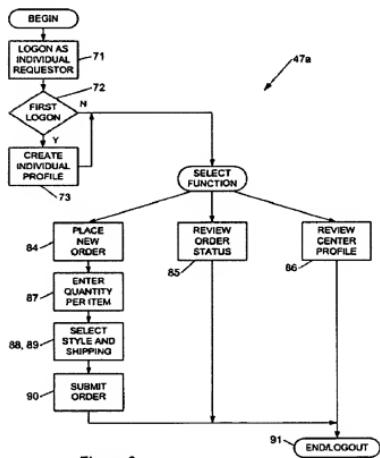


Figure 6

Fig. 6

Create Your Profile	
Stationery Information	
Name*	75
Title*	79
Address*	80
Telephone	76
General Information	
Billing Code	77
Supervisor	78
Contact Phone	
Username*	
Save Profile	

Fig. 7

ii. Applicant's Steps of Receiving and Transmitting

Contrary to the Examiner's arguments, the cited passages of Lopez clearly fail to teach all of Applicant's claimed elements for many reasons.

First, claim 75 of the present application recites that there must be two users in the same organization. The first user logs in and provides instructions over a network. The instructions define at least one aspect of the personalization information which may be changed, and one aspect which may not:

receiving instructions over a network from the first user within the organization, the instructions defining which aspects of the information have values which may be changed by a second user within the organization such that the instructions define at least one aspect which may be changed and at least one aspect which may not be changed

(Claim 75, emphasis added.) For example, an administrator may wish to prevent other employees from changing the corporate logo or font sizes, but allow other employees to change their employee identification number. (See, e.g., Specification from page 31, line 16 to page 32, line 7.)

The personalization information is then transmitted to a second user. The transmitted information distinguishes those personalization aspects that the second user may change from those that the second user may not:

transmitting to the second user over the network the values of aspects and an indication, in accordance with the instructions and based on the second user's login information, distinguishing the aspects which the second user may change from those which the second user may not change

(Claim 75, emphasis added.) The foregoing step of distinguishing expressly depends on two different criteria: (1) the second user's login information and (2) the first user's instructions:

in accordance with the instructions and
based on the second user's login
information, distinguishing the aspects
which the second user may change from those
which the second user may not change

(Claim 75, emphasis added.)

iii. The Cited Art Fails to Teach the Steps of Receiving and Transmitting As Claimed

The Examiner argues that Lopez's Figure 7 teaches the claim element of transmitting, to the second user, (1) the values of aspects and (2) an indication distinguishing the aspects which the second user may change from those which the second user may not change. However, Lopez does no such thing.

First, even if one could argue that Figure 7 teaches aspects of personalization information that can be changed,¹ it does not teach transmitting the values of those aspects to the second user (i.e., the user who will set the values of the changeable aspects). The "profile" screen of Figure 7 starts blank:

¹ Applicant takes no position on the merits of such an argument for the purposes of this appeal.

Create Your Profile	
Stationery Information	
Name*	75
Title*	79
Address*	80
Telephone	76
General Information	
Billing Code	77
Supervisor	78
Contact Phone	79
Username*	80
<input type="button" value="Save Profile"/>	

(Lopez at Figure 7.) There is nothing in Figure 7 which teaches that the values of aspects were transmitted to the user.

However, even if Lopez did teach transmitting, to the second user, the values of the aspects that will be used to personalize the product, Lopez still fails to teach other aspects of the invention.

In Lopez's Figure 7, the text boxes (75, 79, 80, 76, 77, and 78) represent fields for a database corresponding with various product specifications (Lopez, at col. 5, 11. 52-58). However, there is nothing in Lopez which teaches transmitting an indication that distinguishes the aspects which the second user may change from those which the second user may not change. This is a requirement of claim 75, yet it is completely missing from Figure 7. Indeed, Figure 7, at best teaches transmitting only those aspects of personalization information that the second user may change.

Of course, having failed to teach transmitting an indication distinguishing between the aspects the second user may change versus what the user may not, Lopez certainly fails to teach that the indication depends on both the first user's

instructions and the second user's login information. As recited in claim 75, indicating what can be changed depends on both types of information. Again, there is simply no teaching of this feature.

Finally, even if all of the foregoing features were present, there is no teaching in Lopez that the first and second user are in the same organization. In fact, the Examiner does not even argue that they are.

The Examiner acknowledges that Lopez does not teach all of the elements of the claimed invention, so the Examiner took "Official Notice" with respect to some missing elements. However, the Official Notice relates to the use of the Internet to transmit product layout and fields. In that regard, the Official Notice is not alleged to remedy the foregoing deficiencies of Lopez.

**iv. The Examiner's Official Notice Fails to Teach
The Claimed Steps Of Receiving And Transmitting**

As noted above, the Examiner relies on Official Notice to reject the claims. While it is appropriate to rely on Official Notice in some circumstances, Applicant respectfully submits that the extent of the Official Notice in this case is well beyond what is typical or proper.

For example, the Examiner takes Official Notice that the Internet may be used to transfer information. Applicant agrees that such Official Notice is proper. However, the Official Notice also goes much further than that:

The Examiner takes Official Notice that the use of the Internet to transfer information about product layout and fields which may be modified was old and well known in the art (design of websites). It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include in Lopez, Jr. using the internet to design the product and define the modifiable

fields, because this would allow the manufacturer to be at a remote location that may be less expensive for manufacture than their clients headquarters which may be in a very expensive part of the country (Opelika, Alabama vs. New York City).

(1/18/07 Official Action at 3-4 (emphasis added).) In other words, the Examiner is taking Official Notice that it was well known, prior to October 2000, to use the Internet to (1) transfer information about product layout and fields, (2) make such layouts and fields modifiable, (3) design the product, (4) define the modifiable fields and (5) all for the purpose of permitting manufacture at remote locations that are less expensive than the client headquarters.

M.P.E.P. § 2144.03 is clear that Official Notice must be judicially applied, and that:

It would not be appropriate for the examiner to take official notice of facts without citing a prior art reference where the facts asserted to be well known are not capable of instant and unquestionable demonstration as being well-known. For example, assertions of technical facts in the areas of esoteric technology or specific knowledge of the prior art must always be supported by citation to some reference work recognized as standard in the pertinent art.

(Id. (emphasis added).) Applicant respectfully submits it is hardly "unquestionable" that the Internet was used for all of the above-identified elements prior to October 2000 (the filing date of the instant application). Indeed, the Official Notice compounds the inappropriateness of its excessive scope by not just alleging the elements without evidence, but by also arguing that it was well known for all of these elements to exist in combination with one another.

Regardless of whether or not the features noticed in the Office Actions are well known, M.P.E.P. § 2144.03 states that it is never appropriate to rely solely on common knowledge as the principal evidence upon which a rejection is based without evidentiary support in the record. Accordingly, Applicant traverses the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejections based on the Official Notices taken in the outstanding Office Action for the reason that, without the temporal and structural context by which these features are known to the artisan, it is impossible to conclude that it would be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine those noticed features with the art of record. Indeed, the context by which these features are allegedly known might itself provide reasons to rebut a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

In fact, Applicant strongly disagrees that it would be obvious to combine the unsubstantiated Official Notice with Lopez. Such a modification would require a substantial reconstruction or redesign of the method proposed by Lopez. For example, it would at least require substantial software developments to allow interfacing with Lopez's "Quark Express" software tool, and there is clearly no evidence from the record that a person of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to perform such changes and redesign. See *In re Ratti*, 46 C.C.P.A. 976, 981, 270 F.2d 810, 813, 123 USPQ 349, 352 (Cust. & Pat. App. 1959) (reversing an obviousness rejection where the "suggested combination of references would require a substantial reconstruction and redesign of the elements shown in [the primary reference] as well as a change in the basic principle under which the [primary reference] construction was designed to operate.").

B. Rejection of Claims 96 and 103, and their dependent claims, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Lopez in view of Official Notice

The January 18, 2007 Office Action summarily rejects independent claims 96 and 103 based on the same art and arguments as independent claim 75. (1/18/07 Office Action at page 3.)

In fact, claim 96 recites different limitations than claim 75. The step of storing information in claim 96 requires storing whether a first and second aspect of the personalization information is locked or unlocked. If the aspect is locked, then the value of the aspect may not be changed. Conversely, if the aspect is unlocked, then the value of the aspect may be changed.

According to claim 96, a web page is sent to the client describing the first and second aspect. If the aspect is locked, then the web page displays the value of the aspect. If the aspect is unlocked, then the web page indicates that the value of the aspect may be changed.

The last step of claim 96 is "receiving from the user an instruction to change the information representing whether the first aspect is locked or unlocked." This step does not require simply receiving the information representing the value of the aspect, such as the name of a person. Rather, it states receiving an instruction from the client to change whether the aspect is locked or unlocked. As noted above, claim 96 expressly defines "unlocked" and "locked" as representing whether the value may be changed or not.

The Office Action does not point to any teachings of any reference teaching any feature of receiving an instruction from the client to change whether the aspect is locked or unlocked. Moreover, Applicants are not aware of any portions of Lopez which teach or suggest this feature.

Similarly, Lopez fails to teach the elements of claim 103. Claim 103 is directed to a system of allowing a user to provide personalization information. The system includes, *inter alia*, means for receiving from the user an instruction to change the information representing whether the first aspect is locked or unlocked. Accordingly, allowance of claims 96 and 103, and all dependent claims thereon, is respectfully requested.

C. Rejection of Claim 104, and its dependent claims, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Lopez

As summarized above, the invention as recited in claim 104 is generally directed to a method of receiving personalized information to be displayed on a product. The method comprises, *inter alia*, the steps of:

- receiving locking instructions from a first user to lock certain aspects,
- sending values of aspects to a second user and indicating whether the aspect is locked,
- receiving instructions from a second user to unlock a locked aspect, and
- resending the value of the prior locked aspect to the second user with an indication that the value may now be changed.

In addition to the deficiencies of Lopez described above, nothing in Lopez or the Official Notice teaches, or is even alleged to teach, receiving instructions from a second user to unlock a locked aspect, and resending the value of the prior locked aspect to the second user with an indication that the value may now be changed. The teaching is simply and completely missing.

D. Remaining Allegations

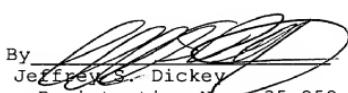
Applicant disagrees with other allegations in the Office Action. However, in light of the clear deficiencies of the art related upon by the Examiner, Applicant does not believe it is necessary to address such allegations. Therefore, in the event new arguments are made with respect to the art relied upon by the Examiner, or other references, Applicant reserves the right to address such allegations.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In light of the above discussion, Applicant requests that the pending rejections be reversed, and the claims allowed to issue as presented.

Dated: October 4, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By 
Jeffrey S. Dickey
Registration No.: 35,858
LERNER, DAVID, LITTBENBERG,
KRUMLHOLZ & MENTLIK, LLP
600 South Avenue West
Westfield, New Jersey 07090
(908) 654-5000
Attorney for Applicant

APPENDIX A - CLAIMS

Claims 1-74 are not pending in this application.

75. A method of obtaining information about a personalized product to be provided from a provider to an organization, the personalized product displaying information provided by the organization, the method comprising the provider:

receiving login information identifying a first user within the organization;

receiving instructions over a network from the first user within the organization, the instructions defining which aspects of the information have values which may be changed by a second user within the organization such that the instructions define at least one aspect which may be changed and at least one aspect which may not be changed;

receiving login information identifying the second user within the organization, wherein the login information of the second user is different from the login information of the first user;

transmitting to the second user over the network the values of aspects and an indication, in accordance with the instructions and based on the second user's login information, distinguishing the aspects which the second user may change from those which the second user may not change; and

receiving from the second user over the network the value of an aspect which may be changed in accordance with the instructions and which has changed from the transmitted value.

76. The method of claim 75 wherein the step of transmitting includes sending the list in a web page to the second user.

77. The method of claim 75 wherein the information to be displayed comprises graphics or text to be personalized on the product.

78. The method of claim 75 wherein the product is a stamp.

79. The method of claim 75 wherein the product is an advertising specialty.

80. The method of claim 75 wherein the aspect includes the content of the information.

81. The method of claim 75 wherein the aspect includes how the information should be formatted.

82. The method of claim 81 wherein the formatting relates to one of more of the font, font size, font style, position or alignment of the information.

83. The method of claim 75 wherein the information constitutes a logo.

84. The method of claim 75 wherein the information constitutes a picture chosen by a user.

85. The method of claim 75 further including at least one of the users modifying the instructions so as to modify whether an aspect may be changed or not.

86. The method of claim 85 further comprising the first user modifying the instructions so as to modify whether an aspect may be changed or not.

87. The method of claim 85 further comprising the second user modifying the instructions so as to modify whether an aspect may be changed or not.

88. The method of claim 85 wherein the step of modifying the instructions comprises sending a web page to the at least one user listing the aspect to be changed and allowing the user to click a control to change the instructions associated with the aspect.

89. The method of claim 88 wherein the control is a checkbox.

90. The method of claim 75 wherein the indication is the appearance of the area for accepting user input of the value.

91. The method of claim 90 wherein a three-dimensional textbox indicates that the aspect may be changed.

92. The method of claim 75 wherein the first user and the second user are the same person.

93. The method of claim 75 wherein the first user and the second user are different people.

94. The method of claim 75 further comprising associating a login or password with the instructions, and wherein the instructions cannot be changed by the first user or second user unless the first user or the second user had provided a valid login or password.

95. The method of claim 75 further comprising displaying the personalized information simultaneously with the aspect values to the second user.

96. A method of allowing a user to provide personalization information over a client/server network, the personalization information used to personalize a product, the method comprising:

storing information representing whether a first and second aspect of the personalization information is locked or unlocked, whereby if an aspect is locked then the value of the aspect may not be changed and if an aspect is unlocked then the value of the aspect may be changed,

sending a web page to the client describing the first and second aspect and, if the aspect is locked then the web page displays the value of the aspect and, if the aspect is unlocked, then the web page indicates that the value of the aspect may be changed, and

receiving from the user an instruction to change the information representing whether the first aspect is locked or unlocked.

97. The method of claim 96 further comprising, after the step of receiving, sending a web page to the client describing the first aspect and, if the first aspect is locked then the web page displays the value of the aspect and, if the aspect is unlocked, then the web page indicates that the value of the aspect may be changed.

98. The method of claim 97 wherein at least one of the aspects relates to the content of personalization information to

be affixed to a stamp and the value of the at least one aspect relates to the content.

99. The method of claim 98 wherein the content identifies an entity.

100. The method of claim 96 wherein the aspect relates to the formatting of personalization information to be affixed to a stamp.

101. The method of claim 96 wherein, if the aspect is unlocked, then the web page also displays the value of the aspect.

102. A system for obtaining information about personalized products comprising:

a processor for executing instructions, and
instructions including:

receiving login information identifying a first user within the organization;

receiving login information identifying a second user within the organization, wherein the login information of the second user is different from the login information of the first user;

receiving instructions from a first user, the instructions defining which aspects of personalization information to be affixed to a product may be changed by a second user; displaying a list of the aspects to a second user, the list indicating which aspects may be changed and which may not based on the instructions from the first user and based on the second user's login information; and receiving from the second user the values of the aspects which may be changed.

103. A system of allowing a user to provide personalization information over a client/server network, the system comprising:

means for storing information representing whether a first and second aspect of the personalization information is locked or unlocked, whereby if an aspect is locked then the value of the aspect may not be changed and if an aspect is unlocked then the value of the aspect may be changed,

means for sending a web page to the client describing the first and second aspect and, if the aspect is locked then the web page displays the value of the aspect and, if the aspect is unlocked, then the web page indicates that the value of the aspect may be changed, and

means for receiving from the user an instruction to change the information representing whether the first aspect is locked or unlocked.

104. A method of receiving personalized information to be displayed on a product, the personalization information having aspects, the aspects having values, the method comprising:

receiving locking instructions from a first user, whereby if the instructions identify an aspect as being locked, then the value cannot be changed until the aspect is unlocked;

sending values of aspects to a second user and indicating whether the aspect is locked, at least one of the aspects being locked;

receiving an instruction from a second user to unlock a locked aspect;

resending the value of the prior locked aspect to the second user with an indication that the value may now be changed; and

receiving the value of the prior locked aspect.

105. The method of claim 104 further comprising indicating which values are unlocked during the step of sending the values.

106. The method of claim 105 wherein: the step of sending and resending values comprises sending a web page containing controls capable of receiving input from a user; and the step of receiving instructions relating to locking and unlocking comprises sending a web page with controls allowing the user to indicate which aspects may be locked or unlocked and receiving the values of the controls from the user.

107. The method of claim 106 wherein the step of sending further includes placing the value in a user-modifiable textbox to indicate that the value's associated aspect is unlocked.

108. The method of claim 104 further including enabling one of the users to unlock an aspect and disabling the other user from unlocking the same aspect.

109. The method of claim 108 further including receiving a login or password from the users.

110. The method of claim 109 further including determining whether a user is enabled or disabled from unlocking an aspect based on the user's login or password.

111. A method of customizing a product to be sold by a provider to an organization, said product including personalization information to be displayed by the product, said method comprising:

receiving login information identifying a first user;

permitting a first user to store the value of an aspect of the personalization information by determining whether the login information of the first user permits access to storing such value;

receiving login information identifying a second user, wherein the login information of the second user is different than the login information of the first user;

sending data about said product over a network to the second user of the organization, the data including unmodifiable aspects of the personalization information which have values stored by the first user of the organization;

receiving, from the second user, customized values for other aspects of the personalization information; and

customizing the product based on the values provided by both users.

112. The method of claim 111 wherein the sent data includes information relating to where the aspects are displayed on the product.

APPENDIX B - EVIDENCE

NONE

APPENDIX C - RELATED PROCEEDINGS

NONE